

**An Update on Road Projects in Carmel Valley
Council President Scott Peters, First District
For the Carmel Valley News, March 2008**

I want to update you on an important project in Carmel Valley and Torrey Pines, one which has received much attention in this paper and other media outlets. Caltrans recently began the environmental review process to identify various ways to finally connect SR 56 and Interstate 5. We need to make sure they choose a direct connector alternative that respects the environment and our quality of life.

Currently, Caltrans is narrowing the number of alternatives to be studied in the environmental review process. At the end of this year, it will complete the required environmental review of potential options to link these two busy freeways. Once the review is complete, the public comment period begins, when residents are encouraged to read the report and provide feedback on the several alternatives.

Much has been said and written about the most controversial of these options-flyover ramps which would require the demolition of several homes on the bluff overlooking I-5. Let me be clear: I do not support the taking of any homes to complete this project. There are a number of other ways to complete the connectors without condemning the homes so many families have worked so hard to purchase and improve. Last month, Caltrans unveiled a modified direct connector alternative that does not require the taking of homes, in addition to other options. I urge Caltrans to consider these options and to find a way to keep their promise to the community in a way that promotes and protects our quality of life.

Input from local residents is vital to this process. Several years ago, I formed a steering committee comprised of the public agencies involved in this project, to keep residents informed and up to date. Due to the increased public interest in this project, I recently added a representative of the Point Del Mar neighborhood to sit on that committee. She joins representatives from the Torrey Pines and Carmel Valley Community Planning Groups, the City of San Diego, the office of State Senator Christine Kehoe, Caltrans, Pardee Homes and Dokken Engineering.

At the next steering committee meeting in April, Caltrans will present an analysis of the ways each of these options would affect traffic circulation in the area. For more information on the steering committee and the SR56/I-5 project, you can visit the City's website, www.sandiego.gov/5_56freewayconnectors.

Community planning groups, including Carmel Valley and Torrey Pines, continue to be the best point of contact for residents. These agencies are heavily involved in these meetings and can offer the most up-to-date information for those interested in learning more. Time is regularly set aside at their monthly meetings to discuss this project and take input from the public.

Another community project I wanted you to know about is the series of road resurfacings scheduled for the Del Mar Heights and Carmel Valley area over the next several months. This fiscal year, the Council approved \$27.25 million in road resurfacing, a 33% increase over last year, and a 950% increase over fiscal year 2006. Crews will apply an asphalt overlay to over 4000 feet of Portofino Drive, between Del Mar Heights Road and Portofino Circle. Asphalt overlay is considered the “gold standard” of road resurfacing. Crews will grind down the existing road and apply asphalt between one and three inches thick. This should protect and preserve the road for 15 to 20 years.

For roads in need of moderate repair, crews will apply a layer of “slurry seal,” a mixture of sand, emulsion and recycled tires that preserves and extends the life of sound asphalt roads. Recycled tires not only provide a darker, more resilient finish, they also benefit the environment. Since 1998, the City’s rubberized slurry seal program diverted over 429,000 tires from the landfill.

Once the rainy season is over, crews will fan out across the city to begin these repairs, most likely in the fall. Roads scheduled for slurry seal later this year and early next year include Ashley Falls Drive, Carmel Country Road, Carmel Knolls Road, Intermezzo Way, Mango Drive, Pearlman Way and Tarantella Lane.